

Remarks

The Examiner is thanked for the careful consideration given the present patent application. By way of the present amendment, certain claims have been canceled, other claims have been amended and new claims added. No new matter has been added by way of any of the amendments. The subject claims are distinct from the references cited by the Examiner. The independent claims pending in the present application are 14, 48, 53, and 54. Each of these claims specifies a database that includes at least one virtual folder corresponding to each of at least two metadata schemes. The claims further specify that a copy of each image is stored in a single location and a pointer to the image location is placed in each appropriate folder (which may include subfolders). These features are not found in the Wilcock reference or any other art of record.

As discussed at paragraph 35 of the specification, and shown in Fig. 5, the virtual folder may include a pointer to the image location, where the image file is stored in a single location within the storage. As shown in Fig. 5, for instance, the example images of Fig. 4 are arranged by data in one folder and arranged again by subjects in another folder. Other folders, designated as subfolders, are further provided. As indicated in the specification, the data and subject folders could contain many other subfolders in addition to or instead of those shown. As further explained in the specification (see, e.g., ¶ 38) the same image could be placed in folders for different users. More generally, other configurations are possible.

As depicted in Fig. 5 and explained in the specification, the virtual folder is a data structure that includes pointers to the image data. The cited art does not disclose or suggest such folder. The Examiner has earlier pointed to the Wilcock reference for support for the virtual folder. Wilcock, however, fails to disclose a data structure that includes pointers to image data. In finding the virtual folder, the Examiner points to the fact that Wilcock purports to disclose images with metadata stored in a database in memory (see ¶ 32 of the final Office Action). Irrespective of whether these teaching are sufficient to disclose a "folder," there is no suggestion in Wilcock of a data structure that includes a pointer to an image location in the database.

The remaining references are relied upon for ancillary features of the claims, and do not disclose or suggest a virtual folder that includes pointer to an image location. These references could not support a rejection of the invention as presently claimed.

In a counterpart European application, the "virtual folder" is said to be found in Squibbs, U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0015759. Squibbs is a co-inventor in the Wilcock reference, and many of the figures of Squibbs appear identical to those of Wilcock. The teachings of Squibbs with respect to a "folder" are deemed essentially identical to those of the Wilcock reference cited here, and accordingly no rejection over the Squibbs reference should be made of the claims as amended.

For these reasons, the claims are deemed allowable over all art of record. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this case to issuance.

Respectfully submitted,

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